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*THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT:*

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BEING THE  
SUBSTANCE  
OF A  
SERMON

PREACHED AT  
CAMDEN CHAPEL, PECKHAM,  
ON  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23<sup>d</sup>, 1798,

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BY  
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## SERMON.

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TITUS, ii. 14.

“WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.”

THIS admirable text comprises within its narrow limits the sum and substance of the truth as it is in Jesus.—It is so full and comprehensive, that it may, I apprehend, be justly entitled an *epitome* of the *everlasting gospel*. It presents to our view that illustrious Personage, on whom alone the hope of the guilty hangs. It reveals his grand design in the gift of himself for us. It manifests the extent of his redemption. It discloses the latent purposes of his heart in the shedding of his blood. It exhibits the motives of the redeemer in the purification of his people. It clearly characterizes the persons of the redeemed, and indisputably proves the purity, and power of the gospel of Jesus.—In the discussion of this important subject, of which we have already taken

taken a general survey, it is my intention to observe the following method.

I. I Shall endeavour to estimate the value of the gift—"Himself."

II. Present to your view the design of the giver in the bestowment of the gift—the redemption and purification of his people.

III. Unfold the various purposes for which he has redeemed, and purified their persons, implied in the words of my text—for "Himself."

IV. Exhibit the character of the purified—"A peculiar people, zealous of good works."

I. In the execution of this plan I shall first endeavour to form an estimate of the value of the gift, which the Saviour of sinners has conferred, in the most sovereign, free, and gracious manner, on creatures the most unworthy, and illdeserving. In order to effect my purpose, as far as it is practicable for a finite and fallible creature, it will be necessary to ascertain its nature. It is evident, then, from the very letter of my text, that the gift, which is the object of our estimate, is the Saviour himself. It is equally clear from the context, when restored, by the aid of sound criticism, from its present obscurity, to its genuine import, its native beauty, and original glory, the *Saviour is divine*. The passage, which I shall adduce in support of this assertion, stands in immediate connexion with the words  
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of my text, and is strongly expressive of the saint's longings for the glorious appearance of their Lord and Saviour. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the *great God*,\* *EVEN our Saviour Jesus Christ*." This clear and explicit testimony, by incontestibly proving the *eternal* and *underived* divinity of the Saviour, necessarily determines the nature of the Gift. It demonstrates that it is the *DIVINE GIFT* of a *DIVINE DONOR*. It proves that *He* is dignified with every perfection

\* That the Greek particle, which our translators have very improperly rendered *and*, is not copulative, in this connexion, but exegetical, or explanatory, is evident both from the scope of the writer, and the analogy of faith. Undoubtedly it is not the design of the inspired penman, in this passage, to represent the saints of God, as looking for the appearance of two distinct objects, viz. *that* of the great God, and *that* of Jesus Christ, which the present translation *necessarily* intends. Besides it is unscriptural to apply the term *appearing* to the great God; if, by that phrase, the person of the Father is to be understood: for the Father, in the sacred scriptures, is always represented as *invisible*. Moreover the original word, rendered *appearing*, is only used *six times* in the new testament, in *five* of which, according to the literal meaning of the common version, it is exclusively applied to the Son; and I see no sufficient reason that can be assigned why that should not be the case *here*. Nay; the obvious intention of the Apostle, which is to represent the second illustrious advent of *GOD-JESUS*, even the *GREAT GOD-JESUS*, as the object of the saint's longings, and the analogy of faith demand, imperiously demand, that the copulative particle *and* should be expunged from the text, and the explanatory one *even* inserted in its stead.

perfection of deity, and adorned with every excellency of undefiled manhood, He is *perfect God* and *perfect Man* in one *glorious Christ*. In the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for his people, the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwelt. The divinity of the gift renders the ransom immensely valuable. On this account it infinitely transcends in point of value and virtue, all created things, whether inanimate or animate, irrational or rational, human or angelic. Of that part of creation which is inanimate, gold, silver, and precious stones are by far the most valuable. Valuable, however, as they are, they are not to be compared with that gift, which is the price of our redemption. Gold and silver cannot effect what it does. They cannot deliver one soul from going down to the pit of perdition, and redeem it to God. "Forasmuch," says the Apostle, "as ye know that ye were *not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold* from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; *but with the precious blood of Christ*". Indeed, such is the preciousness of this gift, which enriches every believer, that, in the estimation of a competent judge, \* the richest gems merit not a comparison with it. Wisdom, † says he, is more precious than

\* Solomon. vide 1 Kings iv. 29. 34.

† By wisdom we are to understand Jesus Christ, who is called by the Apostle the wisdom of God,

than pearls. ‡ The intrinsic worth of one of these is immense. For instance, that, which was swallowed, at one draught, by the vain Cleopatra, was valued at 80,000l. sterling. That, which was in the possession of the Emperor of Persia, was still more valuable. History informs us that it was bought at the enormous price of 110,400l. The diamond, however, takes priority of every other species of precious stones. It stands alone unrivalled, in the first place, by the universal consent of all nations and ages. The largest, that has yet been found, is that of the great Mogul, which weighs 279 carats, and is computed to be nearly worth 800,000l. If, then, one single gem be of such immense value, how vast must be the amount of the united sums arising from the respective worth of all those precious stones, which have already been discovered, or are yet entombed in the bowels of the earth, or the depth of the sea! *Yet, says Job, no mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.* In such estimation, was Jesus the wisdom of God, held by the ancient worthies. They gave him a decided preference to every thing that the natural man deems most valuable. They preferred him to silver and

‡ Bochart, whom Hervey styles a prodigy of oriental learning, has indisputably proved that the Hebrew word rendered *rubies*, ought to be translated *pearls*.

and Gold; to pure gold; to the gold of Ophir, and to jewels of fine gold; to the precious onyx, and the sapphire; to the transparent chrystal, the beautiful coral, and the brilliant pearl; the costly ruby, and the topaz of Ethiopia. Job xxviii. 15. 20. Exalted, however, as their ideas were, and strong as their expressions are, of the preciousness of Christ; yet, in point of elevation of thought, and energy of diction, in this instance, every Patriarch and prophet are far surpassed by the superior genius of Solomon.

Indeed, on this occasion, in the person of this distinguished monarch, thought and expression seem to have arrived at their "*ne plus ultra*." Human intellect can soar no higher; Language itself can express no more. As one that had felt the virtue of the Saviour, and knew his value, he avers that the Friend of Sinners is not only more precious than the richest gems; but infinitely ~~more~~ preferable to any thing which man *can desire*. In his unerring judgment, all the precious things that ever delighted the eye, charmed the ear, or captivated the heart; that the heavens ever brought forth, the earth ever yielded from within or from without, or the wide ocean ever produced, that *are desirable*, that *may or can be desired* by the vast and capacious soul of man, merit not a comparison with the great God Man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself

himself for our Redemption. Hear his own express testimony concerning the superlative worth, and transcendent excellency of Jesus, in the character of Wisdom, delivered in that elegant simplicity of style, which nothing can exceed. "Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." Prov. viii. 11.

Where the same subject is elsewhere introduced, he expresses his sentiments in language, if possible, still more energetical and comprehensive. "She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou *canst* desire, are not to be compared unto Her." Prov. iii. 15.

As this gift transcends *in value* all inanimate things however precious, so, in *point of virtue*, it exceeds that part of creation, which is animate; but irrational, as birds, beasts, &c. Under the law young pigeons and turtle doves, kids and goats, lambs and rams, heifers and bullocks were sacrificed by divine appointment. We have, however, a scriptural warrant for asserting that the legal sacrifices did not possess sufficient virtue to put away sin, purge and perfect the conscience, pacify Jehovah, and inspire the approaching criminal with confidence. Jehovah's reply to Balaam's query fully establishes the truth of this position. "Wherewith, says that wicked and idolatrous prophet, shall I come before the

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Lord,

Lord, and bow myself before the most high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, *for a trespass offering*, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil, *for a meat offering*, &c.? Mich. vi. 6. 7. The Lord replies, "He hath shewed thee, O man, "what is good" for these important purposes, viz. Jesus, the great propitiatory sacrifice, prefigured by all the various levitical oblations.\* This reply, tho' not couched in terms positively negative, evidently amounts to a peremptory denial: for, by directing him from the typical to the real sacrifice, He plainly saith, there is no virtue in the former to answer the purposes that you propose: atonement for sin, and peace with God are made by the *latter*, and *the latter only*. It's evident import is, that no sacrifice, however costly, but that of Jesus, can open a way of access to the throne of grace, obtain an entrance for the coming sinner into the holiest, and render him and his services acceptable to God. What we have here stated, as fact, upon the implicit evidence of the prophet, is fully confirmed, in every iota, by the most express and cogent testimonies of the chief of the apostles. When contrasting *the law*, in his epistle to his countrymen, *with Jesus, its end*, he strongly insists on the weakness and unprofitableness of the *former*, whilst

\* See Theron and Aspasio, Dia. 7.

whilst he strenuously maintains the power and utility of the *latter*. "The *law*, saith he, made *nothing perfect*; but the bringing in of a *better hope did*; by the which we draw nigh to God. The *law* neither *perfected the person*, the *conscience*, nor the *services* of the worshipper. *Not his person*: for the apostle testifies, that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin: and there is no perfection where sin remains. *Not the conscience*: for we are assured from the same high authority, that the *law*, with its gifts and sacrifices, which were offered year by year continually, could not make him that did the service *perfect*, as pertaining to the *Conscience*. *Not the service*: for that is only "acceptable to God by Christ Jesus." What the *law* could not effect, *Jesus has accomplished*. He is the rock, his *work* is *perfect*. Hereby our *persons*, *consciences*, and *performances* are *for ever perfected*. His obedience unto death *perfects our persons*. By one offering, saith Paul, He hath *perfected* for ever *them* that are sanctified. His blood *perfects our consciences*. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, says John, cleanses us from all "sin." His sacrifice *perfects our performances*: thereby he hath put away the iniquity of our holy things.\*

Sin, that partition-wall, which separates between  
God

\* Exod. xxviii. 38.

God and the soul, being thus removed by the better hope, we draw nigh to the Father with boldness and confidence by the faith of Jesus.\* Sin gives infinite offence to a pure and holy God. It is eternally and inexpressibly hateful and loathsome to his unspotted purity. It exposes the sinner to the tremendous wrath of the offended Majesty of Heaven, and renders him obnoxious to eternal ruin. 'Tis not therefore a matter of wonder that the awakened sinner's first enquiry should be, "Will the Lord be pleased?" If there be a sinner before me whose conscience is pained with guilt, who feels the present, and dreads the future wrath of an offended God, and is, consequently, enquiring, *will the Lord be pleased?* I answer, *He is pleased.* Does he ask with *what?* I reply; not with thousands of rams, nor with ten thousands of rivers of oil. *In these* God has *no pleasure*; but *in Christ* He is *well pleased*; on both these points the attestation of the Apostle is clear and explicit. Heb. x. 5. 6. 7. 10. Wherefore when he comes into the world, He saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offering and sacrifice for sin thou hast no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come to do thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all. In love, that  
 passeth

\* Ephes, iii, 12.

passeth knowledge, He gave *Himself* for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling favour. The blood of the victim was sprinkled o'er the burning throne, and the flames of vindictive wrath for ever extinguished. God is now the very God of Peace, for Jesus has made peace by the blood of the cross. The gospel of peace reveals the glorious fact, and the spirit of peace testifies it to the conscience. Faith comes by hearing the testimony, and the sinner now justified, has joy and peace in believing. The transcendent superiority of the sacrifice of Jesus to every instituted mean of legal purification, and to the whole series of levitical oblations, is fully demonstrated by a comparative view of their different effects. The apostle has made it appear, from an instance on record, that the utmost that the *latter* could effect, was to purify the flesh, or remove external and ceremonial defilement; whilst the *former* possesses everlasting efficacy to cleanse the most polluted conscience from the foulest impurities. "If the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctify to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, ~~be~~ purge the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God."

Rich as the inanimate and irrational parts of creation are, yet the infant, that is dandled upon the

the nurse's knee, or that hangs upon its mother's breast, is infinitely more valuable than both. By reason of its immortality it's worth incomparably exceeds that of the whole world. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

A world is not an equivalent for an immortal soul, *no nor thousands of worlds*. "The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever," for aught that man can do to effect it. But "Blessings for ever on the Lamb," in him we have redemption thro' his blood; *plenteous, eternal* redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the *riches of his glorious grace*. He came to give his life a ransom for many. The ransom was paid, the price accepted, and we are delivered. This deliverance is so great, that no being *merely* human, tho' distinguished by the attribute of immortality, and therefore justly preferable to millions of perishing worlds, could have procured it, tho' presented to God for the purpose. The deluded Balaam however, ignorant of the just demerit of sin, the rigorous requirements of the divine law, and the extensive demands of divine justice, enquires of the prophet of the Lord whether a human sacrifice would be acceptable to God for the expiation of his sins, and atonement of his transgressions. "Shall I give," says he, "*my first born* for my transgression, *the fruit* of  
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of *my body* for the sin of my soul?" The climax, which he used on this occasion, indisputably proves, that he considered a human sacrifice as far superior to any that he could offer from the flocks, or the herds. Notwithstanding, the answer of the prophet indirectly shews, that a human being, offered in sacrifice to God, cannot redeem an immortal soul from sin, death, and hell; and is therefore infinitely exceeded in *point of virtue* by that incomparably precious gift, which is the object of our estimate.

Again, angels are as much superior to men as men are to brutes; yet angels are as unable to redeem fallen men as fallen men are to redeem fallen angels. Their strength and their numbers, in the great work of redemption, do not avail. In number they are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands; yea, according to the unerring testimony of the Spirit, an *innumerable company*. They are mighty in power, they excel in strength. "Yet," says an old divine, in plain but expressive language, "the work of redemption is so weighty that it would break the backs of all the angels in heaven." Arduous as it was, Jesus has accomplished the glorious work, and thereby demonstrated that his value infinitely transcends that of angels. Is it asked why Jesus is so far superior to the highest, as well as the lowest, and every intermediate round in the vast  
scale

scale of creation? I answer—his superiority arises from his nature. *He is divine.* His divinity stamps infinite dignity on his person, communicates infinite merit to his mediatorial work, infinite worth to his vicarious sacrifice, infinite virtue to his bloody death, infinite power to his precious blood, and everlasting efficacy to his prevalent intercession. A believing view of the honour and glory with which Jesus is crowned, will materially contribute to aid our conception, in forming a proper estimate of the value of this precious gift. By faith we look unto Jesus. By faith we see Jesus—highly distinguished by the Father—exalted far above all blessing and praise—and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high: an honour never conferred on a mere creature. Through this telescopic glass we look into the heaven of heavens, and behold him raised far above the highest order of angels, and every name by which any being is named, either in this world, or that which is to come; above all persons of distinction in this world, such as kings, princes, &c. And above all the host of heaven, in that which is to come, such as angels, arch-angels, cherubim and seraphim.

We see him possessed of unlimited power over all the works of his hands, both in heaven and on earth. His dominion extends to the utmost bounds of space. He is the King of Kings, and  
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the Lord of Lords, the governor of the hosts of heaven, the head over all things to the church, both militant and triumphant, *the hope of sinners,* and *the dread of devils.* From this view of Jesus in his exaltation, having every gift at his disposal, every blessing in his hand, and all things under his feet, with will and authority to overrule them for good to the church, we cannot but infer that the gift of Himself is *inexpressibly valuable.*

Moreover, if we take into our account the import of the honorary name, by which the Saviour of sinners is distinguished, in consequence of his perfect obedience unto death, his decisive victory, and glorious triumph over all the powers of darkness; in connexion with the universality of the homage, which, sooner or later, *must* be paid him, the gift will appear *incomparably greater still.*

It is confirmed by apostolic testimony that the Redeemer is not only exalted to the highest pitch of honour and glory possible, as a reward of his unexampled sufferings, and unparalleled obedience; but, that He is dignified with the most illustrious title that distinguishes *any being.*—*'Tis that of Jesus.* Phil. ii. 9. 10. 11. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a *name,* which is *above every name:* That at the *name of Jesus* every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things

under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.—The name Jesus is unquestionably above every other. It is evidently the most comprehensive and illustrious of all the names of the Son of God. It comprises in it salvation, and every attendant blessing. It is so comprehensive, that *every other name*, by which he is distinguished, *may be resolved into it*, and is *assumed* only to shew that *He is* JESUS—THE DIVINE SAVIOUR. Menochius assigns a most satisfactory reason why Jehovah should dignify the captain of our salvation, posterior to his exaltation, with that glorious title, as a mark of honorary distinction, which, prior even to his incarnation, characterized his office, the nature and end of his mission. He avers that by his perfect obedience unto death on the cross, He became an *actual Saviour*, and thereby justly merited to be called *Jesus*.\* And certainly no title is so admirably calculated to eternize the Redeemer's fame, as *that of Jesus*, which is so fully expressive of his decisive victory, and glorious triumph over sin, death, the devil, grave, and hell, and of our consequent complete salvation. Having demonstrated by his work, which is honorable and glorious, his natural and acquired right

\* In cruce factus est perfectio actu Salvator, et hoc meritis ut sic appellaretur, vide Pol. Syn. in loco.

right to universal empire, every creature in heaven, earth, and hell shall pay him homage. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.—Yea, and *every tongue*, whether of *Saint* or *Angel*, *Sinner* or *Devil*, shall publicly confess by *choice* or *force*, his godhead, sovereignty, and dominion. From the *intrinsic worth* of the Saviour, from the *high honour* conferred on him, from the *honorary title* by which he is distinguished, and the *universal homage* which shall be paid him, I infer that the Saviour is *inexpressibly*, yea, *incomprehensibly valuable*, and from my heart, with the warmest affection, thank God for the *unspeakable gift*.

Having discussed the first topic, I proceed

II. To present to your view the end of the giver in the bestowment of the gift—the redemption and purification of his people.

The people of God, like others, by nature and practice, are sinners. Sin brings guilt, and exposes to punishment. Redemption is a deliverance from guilt. The way whereby Jesus delivered his people was by taking their sins upon himself: in consequence of which they are made *innocent*, or *faultless*; as *completely* so as if they had *never sinned*. This grand truth is fully established by the direct testimony of the Spirit of God. “These were redeemed,” says John, “from among men, being the first fruits to God and the Lamb. And in their mouth was no guile; for

for they are *without fault* before the throne of God. It is written, that the Father *laid upon Jesus* the iniquity of us all, that *he bore* our sins in his own body on the tree, and that by the sacrifice of Himself *He hath for ever put them away*. By his infinitely precious death, they are removed as far from us as the east is from the west. Vast and immense as the distance is between the eastern point and western in the starry heavens, so great is that which now subsists between our sins and our souls. Being redeemed from the guilt of sin, we are consequently delivered from the punishment due to it. Jesus, by being made *sin* and a curse for us, hath *redeem'd us from the curse of the law*. Having endured its penalty, in his own person, by the suffering of death, in our law-place, room, and stead, there is therefore now, *no condemnation to us that are in Christ Jesus*. Wherefore we may boldly adopt the apostolic challenge, "Who is he that condemneth?" Christ? No:—"He it is that died." His death was the punishment of our sins, and, therefore, *with judgment we are redeemed*.

Moreover, sin brings into captivity. Redemption is the deliverance of captives. In a state of captivity the children of God, by nature are. To effect their redemption Jesus gave himself a ransom. Hereby the demands of the law, under which they were held prisoners, were answered.

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An historic fact, recorded in the Roman History, will illustrate the nature of this unparelled act. When Annibal invaded Italy, he defeated the Roman Armies several times, and took captive many prisoners. At last the Wily Fabius was sent to meet him. Moved with compassion at the sufferings of his gallant countrymen, whom the Carthaginian had loaded with heavy chains, he enters into a negociation with the captor, and promises the required sum for their redemption.\* An eminent historian † informs us that Fabius transmitted the stipulated sum to Annibal, and in exchange received the Roman captives. As the African general, upon the receipt of the ransom, honorably released his prisoners of war; just so the divine Father, having received the transcendantly valuable price of our redemption, the precious, precious blood of Christ, with infinite honour to every perfection of deity, releases the lawful captives. The word of command is given, *loose them, and let them go. Deliver them from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.* When this *plenteous* and *eternal* redemption is actually revealed by the Spirit of God in the conscience, the prisoner is discharged. Jesus is manifested to his heart as the deliverer that should come out of Sion. In Him He finds redemption thro' his

\* See Hooke's roman history of the second punic war. Chap. 20.

† See Plutarch's life of Fabius.

his blood, even the forgiveness,—the *full, free,* and *everlasting* forgiveness of his sins. Having his numerous offences forgiven thro' the Saviour's blood, his iniquities subdued, his inordinate affections crucified, and the members of the old man mortified, he loves his great deliverer, and cleaves unto the Lord with full purpose of heart. Sin not only renders it's subject guilty, exposes him to punishment, and brings him into captivity; but contaminates and defiles him. Being *sinful*, we are, of course, *polluted creatures*. The stains of sin are so foul and deep, that nitre and much sope cannot efface them. Jesus, however, has given himself for us, to purify as well as redeem us from *all iniquity*. For this important purpose He has shed his precious blood, and at the expence of his life, has opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness. This fountain is filled with Immanuel's blood. As it is the blood of the GREAT GOD JESUS, it possesses *endless* and *boundless* virtue. As sin defiles every thing that it touches, so this blood perfectly cleanses every thing to which it is applied. The deepest stains of the foulest sins are hereby readily and easily expunged, and so completely that *not a vestige* of them *remains*. Sins of a *scarlet hue*, horrible in their nature, and highly aggravated, thro' the medium of this blood, become as *white as snow*; and sinners, whose crimes are as *red as crimson*,

double

double dyed, such as the atrocious murderers of the Son of God, are hereby rendered as *free from stain as the purest wool*. The Psalmist carries the idea still higher. "Purge me with hyssop" (alluding to its typical use in cleansing the leper, &c.) *and I shall be clean; wash me* in the Saviour's blood, which purges the conscience, purifies the heart, and cleanses from all sin, and *I, EVEN I, shall be whiter than the new fallen snow*.

The Church of Christ, *washed by himself*, in his own blood, is perfectly cleansed from all her impurities, and presented to himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH. Thus purified with the washing of water thro' the word, the bridegroom addresses her in language at once expressive of *his intense affection*, and *her transcendent beauty*. Thou art ALL FAIR, my love, there is NO SPOT in thee.

It is incumbent upon me

III. To unfold the various purposes for which Jesus has redeemed and purified the persons of his people, implied in these expressive words—"for Himself."

He has redeemed and purified them for *his own service*. He has delivered them from the law,\* thro' it's death, in order that they may *serve their covenant God and Father in newness of spirit*, and *not in the oldness of the letter*. Having obeyed from the heart the form of sound doctrine delivered unto

\* Rom. vii. 6.

unto them, and assumed, like melted metal, the mould into which they have been cast,† they *serve* God with their spirits in the gospel of Jesus. *The whole revealed will of God is the rule of their conduct.* Being partakers of a divine nature, their desires and their prayers perfectly correspond with those of Epaphras,‡ “ That they may stand perfect and complete *in all the will of God.*” This service is not slavery; but, as it is well expressed in the book of Common Prayer, “ Perfect freedom.” Being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we *serve* God without *servile* fear in righteousness and true holiness. Having our consciences *purged* by the blood of the Lamb, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we *serve our covenant God and Father* in private, domestic, and public acts of spiritual worship. Being not our own, but bought with a price, we *dedicate* ourselves to him, that gave himself for us. Quickened by Jesus we present our bodies *a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable unto God, which we account *a reasonable service.* *In Christ we have grace, and from him we receive it, to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. As Jesus has redeemed and purified us for his service, so also for his delight.* The persons of the redeemed were the objects of the *special love* of Jesus before

† Doctor Owen on the 130 Pm. Page 187, Oa, Ed.

‡ Col. iv. 12.

fore all worlds;\* but, in order to it's manifestation, it was indispensably necessary that the law should be magnified, and justice satisfied. Tho' sons of God, and brethren of Jesus, yet they were *under the law* and *could not* receive the adoption of sons, to which they were predestinated, nor the spirit of adoption, to witness the relation ; *but thro' the medium of redemption.* Therefore, when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that *we might receive* the adoption of sons. In consequence of his love we are called to fellowship with him. He *taketh pleasure* in our persons, and *delighteth* in our services. "The Lord," says David, "*taketh pleasure* in his people," and "The prayer of the upright," says David's Son, "*is his delight.*" The bridegroom, charmed with the incomparable beauty of his bride, thus exclaims in the language of ardent affection, "*How pleasant art thou, O love, for delights.*" In order to manifest the strength and fervour of his love, he has given *her a new name*, expressive of *his peculiar regard.* 'Tis that of HEPHZIBAH, which is, being interpreted, MY DELIGHT IS IN HER. Another purpose for which Jesus has redeemed and purified his people is, that they may be *a residence for himself.* When the Lord chose Zion, this was one grand subordinate end

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which

\* Prov. viii. 31.

which he had in view. He himself asserts, that *he desired it for an habitation*. This is the *mystic hill*, which is as *Bashan*. *It is eminent, fertile, and beautiful, like that delightful mount*. This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever. He hath redeemed Zion with judgment, spoiled upon the cross the principalities and powers of hell, led captivity captive, and received gifts for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. By his spirit He rescues Sion from the power of the enemy, builds up the walls that were broken down, and forms it into a dwelling for HIMSELF, an habitation of GOD thro' the Spirit. Christ dwells in the hearts of his people by Faith, and here he will make his abode. *This is my rest for ever, and here WILL I DWELL*. The glory of his name is, however, the grand purpose for which the people of God are redeemed and purified. In the redemption of the church by his precious blood, He is glorified in the highest. His glory, as GODMAN, from this stupendous work shines forth with inexpressible brightness and lustre. Every perfection of deity is hereby displayed in a manner that infinitely transcends angelic conception. In consequence of this unparalleled achievement, Jesus is crowned with glory and honour, whilst myriads of redeemed men, and elect angels, chant the praises of the triumphant conqueror. At the last day

day he shall come to be *glorified* in his saints, and to be admired of all them that believe.

It remains for me

IV. To exhibit to you the character of the redeemed, a peculiar people, zealous of good works:

They are distinguished by the epithet *peculiar* from the rest of mankind in consequence of being loved with a *peculiar love*. It represents them as the objects of the *great love* of God. Its dimensions are neither *known* nor *knowable*. The longest line of finite understanding *cannot comprehend it*.—It is love that *passes knowledge*.—To *this beloved people* he grants *peculiar nearness*. The Psalmist describes the redeemed as a people “*near to the Lord*.” Jesus is *nearly related* unto them. He is *their Father, their Brother, and their Husband*. He indulges them as *his children, his brethren, and his bride*, with free access to him. He calls them to *fellowship and communion* with him in *all that He is, and has*. He gives them to *taste* that he is *gracious*, to *feed* on his *flesh*, to *feast* on his *bounty*, to *drink* of the *wine of his love*, to *recline* on his *bosom*, and *lean* on his *arm*. He encourages them to come to him in every time of need with *boldness*, to pour out their souls before him, and ask what they will at his hands. He assures them that He is their *sun, and shield*, and that no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

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He confers upon them *peculiar benefits*. He pardons all their sins, heals all their diseases, redeems them from destruction, crowns them with loving kindness and tender mercies, satisfies their souls with good things, renews their strength like the eagle's, gives unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.—In a word, he blesses them with all spiritual blessings, abundantly supplies all their wants, loads them with benefits, and finally saves them in Himself with an everlasting salvation. Moreover, they are zealous of good works. The subject of good works has been much misrepresented, and is, I fear, still much misunderstood. Professors themselves are not sufficiently acquainted with their nature, use, and end. What then is the distinguishing character of a good work? I answer, it is a work done *from a right motive, by a right rule, and directed to a proper end*. Its *motive* is the *love of God*, its *rule* is the *word of God*, and its *end* is the *glory of God*. So essentially necessary are these properties to constitute a good work, that the want of *one* of them would render the most benevolent, liberal, and splendid act absolutely unprofitable to the agent.—“Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.” It follows of course, that *none but good men can do good works*;

*works*; all others are destitute of the principle of action. Men are compared to trees in the word of God: good men to good trees, and bad men to corrupt trees, as thorns, &c. The good works of good men correspond with the good fruit of good trees, and vice versa. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of the thistle, or bramble bush? No: it would be the part of an ideot to seek such delicious fruit on trees so corrupt.—It is equally absurd to expect that *a bad man should do good works*. If the *man be bad*, his *works cannot be good*. It is as glaring a contradiction to assert that a *bad man may do good works*, as to maintain that a *corrupt tree may bring forth good fruit*, as the *thorn--grapes*, or the *thistle--figs*. The next question, which will arise on this subject, is, What are the uses of good works? I answer, hereby we evidence the sincerity of our profession; manifest the life, purity, and power of our faith; express our gratitude to God for benefits received; silence opposers, convince gainsayers, conquer the strongest prejudices of the ignorant against the truth of God, and frequently win the disobedient to an acknowledgment, approbation, and reception of it.—In a word, by an external conversation conformable to the divine will, we are rendered useful to the church, beneficial to the community, and honourable to God. Is it asked what end the believer (*so called*  
by

by reason of living by what he believes, and not by what he does) has in view in doing good works? I reply, he does not perform good works either to justify his person, or to save his soul. The truth is, he can do no good works till he be first justified by faith. "How," says the pious bishop Beveridge, "can I be justified by my works, when I can do no good works till I be first justified." Neither does a believer work for salvation; but being saved by grace thro' faith, he has the means of performing, and is thoroughly furnished to all good works. The grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared unto him, and taught him to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. He is the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them. He proposes no selfish ends in the performance of natural, civil, relative, moral, religious, and spiritual actions; but in the discharge of every incumbent duty he uniformly aims at the glory of God.—Unlike the antient pharisee and the modern legalist, (*hypocritical devotees!*) He does not fast and pray, give tythes and alms, to be esteemed and applauded by men; but whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever else he does, he does all to the glory of God. The glory of Jehovah is the ultimate end,

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at which the believer, in his general conduct, aims, and he does not miss the mark; for being fruitful in every good word and work, he glorifies God, who works in him to think, to speak, and to act. "Herein," says our Lord, "is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." It appears from the doctrine of this infallible teacher, that our capacity for bearing fruit entirely depends upon our union and communion with Jesus. "Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." It is equally clear that the quantity of fruit borne by each mystical branch in the living vine, will be in exact proportion to the degree of communion which obtains between them. The saved sinner that *lives much on Christ*, and that enjoys *intimate fellowship and close communion with Him*, will be *abundantly fruitful*. "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that *abideth* in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth *much fruit*." The term *abideth*, in the passage cited, is not expressive of the *state of a believer*; but of his *habit of life*: for many abide in union with Christ that bear fruit, which is *good in quality*, tho' the *quantity is not great*: on the other hand, he, who *habitually abides in Christ by believing*, and in whose heart Christ dwells by faith, will bring forth *good fruit*, and *much of it*: for *from HIM is our fruit found*.

Another

Another end, tho' of a subordinate kind, at which the believer aims in the performance of good works, is to testify his gratitude to God for mercies received. The language of his grateful soul is, what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me? Had I an equivalent, I would readily give it. The feelings of his mind are finely express'd by the poetic Watts.

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,

"That were a present far too small,

"Love so amazing, so divine,

"Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Rescued from *the lowest hell*, enrich'd with the incorruptible inheritance of *an eternal heaven*, loaded in the interim with benefits of incalculable value, he feels himself laid under infinite obligations to surrender himself, body, soul, and spirit, gift and grace, time and talents, all that he has, and all that he is, to him, who has loved him and given himself for him. Saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, he offers unto God a libation of praise, and calls upon the name of the Lord. Redeemed from death by the blood of the Saviour, he is desirous of shewing forth the praise of his deliverer, *not merely by his lips; but by his life*. "Thou hast delivered," says "David, "my soul from death, mine eyes from "tears, and my feet from falling; I will walk "before God in the land of the living." The believer also aims to adorn the doctrine of God  
our

our Saviour in all things. He succeeds in his design so far as his spirit and his walk are consistent with the nature of the gospel. That spirit which is peculiarly ornamental to the gospel of our salvation, is a spirit of meekness and quietness. This is an ornament which is in the sight of God of great price. In this manner holy women, in old time, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, and hereby reflected the highest honour on that gospel, which was the instrumental cause of those lovely features in the hidden man of the heart, which rendered them infinitely amiable, in the sight of God and man. As the royal robe distinguishes the monarch, just so good works adorn both the character of the believer, and the gospel that he believes.—These were the ornaments with which the apostle willed that women professing godliness should be adorned. This volition of that man of God was undoubtedly determined by his peculiar regard for the glory of the Lord and the credit of the gospel. The reputation of the doctrine of the Saviour, as well as the glory of his person and kingdom, lay near to his heart. He had felt it to be the power of God to the salvation of his soul, and therefore was peculiarly desirous that it's profess'd friends of every rank should grace it with a conversation becoming, consistent, ornamental. Persuaded that even persons of the lowest order might essentially subserve the interest of the

Redeemer, he enjoined Titus to exhort professing servants, *by a conscientious discharge of every relative duty, to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.* Tit. ii. 9. 10. "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own Masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

The people of God, that believe, love, and enjoy the truth, are not only *thoroughly furnished, prepared, and ready*, for every good word and work, but are *zealous* in the performance of them. Zeal is that *vehement fervour, or burning heat of affection*, which stands directly opposed in the sacred volume, to a fluctuating neutrality,\* a cold indifference,† and loathsome lukewarmness‡ with respect to divine things. It appears from the representation of John, that, *in the religious world, God never formed a middle clime*: || "I know thy works thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were ~~that~~ cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Are the redeemed of the Lord purified by the blood of Christ from *dead works*, to serve the living God? They are *servent in spirit, serving the Lord*. Do they pray? Baptized with the *spirit of burning*, their prayers are not *formal and frigid*, but *affectionate and fervent*. Are they called to

\* 1 Kings, xviii. 21.—† Acts, xviii. 17.—‡ Rev. iii. 15. 16.

|| An Allusion to Ovid's Representation of the *material World*.

Met. B. 1. Fab. 2.

*preach the everlasting gospel to their fellow sinners? Their lips being touched with a live coal from off the altar, Apollos-like, fervent in spirit, they speak and teach diligently the things of the Lord. Do they love the brethren? It is with fervent affection. Do they regard the Ministers of the word? It is with a fervent mind. Do they love the adorable Saviour? It is with ardent affection; with a flame of love that many waters cannot quench, nor floods drown. Are they warranted to hope for the best gifts? They fervently desire them. Are they exhorted to abound in every good work? They zealously affect every good thing, and are careful to maintain good works. Having discussed the several propositions of this important subject, I shall conclude this discourse with*

#### A BRIEF ADDRESS.

Beloved, permit me to propose to you a momentous question, which was once put, with a little variation, by the apostle of the gentiles, to a crowned head. "*Believe ye the prophets?*" With one voice they testify of Jesus. "To him give all the prophets witness, that thro' his name "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of Sins"—The question is proposed; but my situation prevents me from receiving your answer. I'll therefore reply on behalf of several of my auditors in the affirmative language of the apostle, "*I know that you believe,*" "*to the saving of the soul.*" By believing the testimony of the spirit concerning Jesus, ye have received the inestimable gift. "*As therefore ye have received*

"Christ Jesus the Lord *so walk in him.*" *Walk in*  
 the Lord by *faith*, so that ye may walk *worthy* of  
 him unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every  
 good work, and increasing in the knowledge of  
 God. As ye have believed thro' grace, "There-  
 fore my beloved brethren, be ye *stedfast, un-*  
*moveable, always abounding* in the work of the  
 "Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour  
 "is not in vain in the Lord." But this is not  
 true of all: for, says the apostle, "*all men have*  
*not faith.*" They, therefore, that have it not,  
 are yet in their *sins*. And the faithful witness  
 avers, that, *if we believe not in him, we must die in*  
*our sins*. To you, therefore, that have not re-  
 ceived the truth in the love of it, I say, in the  
 name, and from the authority of the eternal God,  
 that cannot lie, that ye are dead in sin, dead in law,  
 and in extreme danger of everlasting death. May  
 God awaken you to a feeling sense of your lost  
 estate, undone condition, and imminent peril!  
 There is but a *step between you and death corporeal*  
*and eternal*. Your feet are upon the threshold of  
 eternity, your souls upon the verge of an eternal hell,  
 and just ready to sink into the burning lake, where  
 the worm dieth NOT, and the fire is NOT quenched.  
 But to the sensible sinner I say, "Come and welcome  
 to Jesus Christ. Tho' vile as Magdalen, bloody as  
 Manassih, wicked as Bunyan, He WILL NOT reject  
 thee. He is the firm and tried friend of sinners.  
 He saves the CHIEF: He receives the WORST. THIS  
 "GOD-MAN receiveth sinners." 9 FE 63

